

NEWS

for immediate release



MARICOPA COUNTY
Environmental Services Department
1001 N. Central, Suite 550
Phoenix, AZ 85004

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Contact: Courtney James --506-6948 or

Mo Heydari, Lead Environmental Health Specialist at 506-6964

MARICOPA COUNTY LAUNCHES NEW PUBLIC EDUCATION CAMPAIGN TO SHOW HOW TO KEEP FOODS SAFE FROM HARMFUL BACTERIA

Maricopa County Environmental Health Inspectors will be in 39 local grocery stores on Wednesday, September 1, 1999, from 2 to 4 p.m. to launch a new public education campaign called "Serve It Safe" as part of National Food Safety Education Month in September. Valley residents will become increasingly aware of an invisible enemy – bacteria and other microscopic pathogens – which may be on their food, hands, or in their kitchens.

Maricopa County has scheduled food education activities throughout the month to heighten awareness of safe food handling and preparation at home.

Maricopa County Environmental Services Department has teamed up with FDA, USDA and local supermarkets to urge people to reduce the risk of foodborne illness, a serious public health problem. Although the exact incidence of foodborne illness in the U.S. is unknown, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimate that as many as 9,000 deaths, and between 6.5 million and 33 million illnesses each year, are directly linked to foodborne pathogens.

Maricopa County experienced 9 foodborne outbreaks and 1,573 persons were reported sick from foodborne illness in 1998.

Environmental health experts say that most foodborne illnesses are preventable by following some basic rules for handling food safely.

Maricopa County Environmental Health Division Manager David Ludwig said, "Foodborne bacteria such as Listeria, E.Coli O157:H7, and Salmonella, which have been found in outbreaks, have no smell and cannot be seen or felt but can lead to serious illness. Even as the food industry and government step up their food safety actions, we all must understand that we play an important role in ensuring the safety of the foods we eat."

In addition to the activities planned for the month of September, there are other food safety tips that consumers can apply to reduce the risk of foodborne illness. They include:

- Wash hands, utensils and surfaces with hot soapy water before and after food preparation.
- Make grocery shopping your last stop on your errand list or take a cooler to keep perishables cold.
- Separate raw meat, poultry, eggs, and seafood and their juices away from ready-to-eat foods; never place cooked food on an unwashed plate that previously held raw meat, poultry, eggs or seafood.
- Cook food to the proper internal temperature and check doneness with a food thermometer.
- Refrigerate or freeze perishables, prepared food and leftovers within two hours and make sure the refrigerator is set at no higher than 40° F and that the freezer unit is set at 0° F.

For information on the closest store for educational activities near you, call (602) 506-6964 or visit our web site at www.maricopa.gov/sbeap.

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Store Name	Store Address
ABCO	1450 N. Dysart Rd.
Food City	4239 W. McDowell
Safeway	14505 W. Grand Ave.
Fry's	5127 W. Indian School Rd.
Food City	3514 W. Glendale
Bashas	2806 W. Cactus
Bashas	6760 W. Deer Valley Rd.
ABCO	2330 W. Bethany Home Rd
Safeway	8021 N. 35 th Ave.
Fry's	6601 W. Indian School Rd
Safeway	5080 W. Olive
Albertson	8035 19 th Ave.
Bashas	10631 N. 32 nd St.
ABCO	13440 N. 7 th St.
Fry's	731 E. Bell Rd
Safeway	Cave Creek & Tatum Blvd.
Bashas	4727 E. Bell Rd.
Bashas	16605 E. Palisades Blvd.
Fry's	10456 N. 74 th St.
ABCO	4402 N. Miller
Bashas	7405 E McDowell
Fry's	1950 W. Ray Rd.
Bashas	701 N. Gilbert
Bashas	3530 E. Southern
Safeway	90 S. Val Vista Rd.
Fry's	1835 E. Guadalupe Rd
Fry's	3332 S. Mill Ave.
ABCO	1845 N. Scottsdale Rd.
Albertson	1919 W. Main St.
Bashas	6720 E. Broadway
Bashas	10715 E. Main St. (Mesa)
Bashas	1717 E. Southern
Bashas	3320 N. 7 th Ave.
Safeway	4740 E. Indian School Rd.
Bashas	3131 E. Indian School Rd.
Southwest	6018 S. Central
Fry's	520 E. Baseline
Bashas	4855 E. Warner

- Fry's stores will be handing out quality food thermometers at each of their participating stores to the first 25 customers that partake in a food safety quiz.
- Bashas will be handing out quality food thermometers at each of their participating stores to the first 16 customers.